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BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,
February 25th, 1842.

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R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE MILITIA,

TO THE

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R E P O R T .

The Committee on Militia, to whom was referred the memorial of the Military Convention which assembled in the city of Frederick on the sixth day of December last; praying that a law may be passed "to reorganize and enroll the militia of this State, and to encourage the formation of uniform volunteer companies," beg leave to report, that they have had the subject under consideration, and are fully impressed with the expediency of some legislation upon the subject.

The existing laws in reference to the militia of this State, are so defective as to render them in a great measure inoperative, and it has been so long since the State has been laid off into defined military divisions and districts, that your committee are of opinion, that any law that could be framed, which did not provide for the formation of new divisions and districts, would fail to accomplish the desired object. By reference to the records in the office of the Adjutant General of the State, your committee find that the boundaries of only six regimental districts are recorded, pursuant to the act of 1834, ch. 251. Probably these are all that are known with any certainty, in the State, exclusive of the city of Baltimore, which has a separate organization. Your committee are of opinion, that the plan suggested by the memorialists, of laying off the State into military divisions and districts, so as to define their boundaries by the civil divisions of the State, will be productive of much good in giving permanency to the system; and that it will lead to the beneficial result of making every citizen know without difficulty, the command under which he may be placed. Apart from the duty of "preparing for war in time of peace," which is one of the wise maxims bequeathed to us by the father of our country, the expediency of enrolling the militia of the State is dictated by considerations of State policy and advantage. By the laws of Congress, an annual distribution of arms, and their appendages, are made to the several States according to the numerical force of their militia.—Maryland obtains her quota under an enrollment made many years ago; and consequently, does not receive her fair proportion; because nearly all

the other States of the Union have efficient militia systems, and recent enrollments. So great is the disadvantage resulting to the State from this fact, that there have been, during the last year, times when the Governor of the State, felt it his duty to reject the application of volunteer companies, for muskets and rifles, lest the State Armory would be so reduced as not to leave a sufficient quantity of arms in it to meet an emergency. Your committee therefore regret, that this subject was not brought under their consideration at an earlier period of the session. They appreciate the importance of the question, and are fully sensible of the necessity of a thorough and entire re-modelling of our whole militia system. As the period however, for closing the session of the General Assembly, under the Constitution, is now so near at hand, and as important business yet remains to be acted on by the House, your committee despair of being able to frame a system which would answer the ends in virtue, and which could be properly considered at the present session. They are also further of opinion, that the subject would be better disposed of, if referred to a commission of officers, who, during the interim between the close of the present, and the meeting of the next Legislature could take the whole matter into their deliberate consideration, and prepare for presentation at the next session, a militia system, which would be adequate to the wants of the State.

Your committee therefore ask to be discharged from the further consideration of the memorial, and recommend the adoption of the accompanying resolutions.

All which is respectfully submitted,

JOHN H. SIMMONS, Chairman.

Resolved by the General Assembly of Maryland, that the Governor be, and he is hereby authorised and directed to appoint, five commissioned officers of the militia of this State, two from the Eastern Shore and three from the Western Shore of competent ability, to frame a militia system, to be submitted to the consideration and action of the next Legislature, laying off the State into divisions, brigades and regimental districts, and defining the boundaries of the same, by the civil divisions of the State; and also providing for a thorough reorganization and enrollment of the militia of the State.

Resolved, That encouragement to uniform volunteer companies be a leading feature in said system.

Resolved, That the officers so appointed, report to the General Assembly of Maryland, as early as practicable at the next December session of the same.

Resolved, That the said officers, or so many of them as may act and perform the duty aforesaid, be allowed a compensation not exceeding the sum of one hundred dollars each.

